



Noticeboard

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Inside This Issue

President's Message	2
From the CEO's Desk	3
Primary Care Reforms	4
Housing	5
Public Transport Charter	6-7
News	8
New CEO	9
Farewell Patsy	10
Sector News	11
For Your Information	12

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News Update!

Segmentation of the public housing waiting list not necessarily going to result in ghettos!

In the November edition of VCOSS *Noticeboard*, I presented an overview of some potential problems that may arise under the Housing Minister's Taskforce proposal to segment Victoria's public housing waiting lists. Since that article there has been a major shift in the direction put forward by Office of Housing officials in the Housing Minister's Taskforce.

The initial proposal was that the waiting list be divided into four segments of need (in order beginning with those most in need, to those only with a low income) and to make allocation to all vacancies in the same order. This would have meant housing all of segment one applicants first, before segment two applicants would be made an offer and so on. Under this plan virtually no segment four applicants (those with a low income and no other special needs) would be offered housing and concentrations of 'those most in need' would occur in less desirable stock where there is greater turnover.

At the last meeting of the Minister's Taskforce

there was broad recognition that the likely problems creating ghettos through this approach must be avoided.

It is now agreed that arranging the waiting list into prioritised segments according to need should not necessarily result in a similar order of allocations and that stock issues and social mix concerns needed to be taken into account before allocations were made.

There is now agreement that a policy for arranging the waiting list into segments is quite separate from a policy relating to allocations and the two must be merged with a great deal of caution.

This is incredibly good news. The initial proposal would have been the easier option to implement by a Housing Minister with a short term view of housing policy. Thankfully, our Housing Minister is acutely aware of the need for maintaining a viable social mix on our public housing estates and is willing to ensure sustainable policies in this area are implemented.

Stephen Nash

Co-operation for Competition

Large and small community agencies are being constantly challenged by government to do more with less.

One way of responding to this challenge is to form a shared services co-operative.

A shared services co-operative is formed by a group of community agencies to provide one or more services that increase the competitiveness of the individual members. The idea then, is to purchase or provide products and/or services at a cost that is less than the cost to the individual member of purchasing the service individually.

Because they are democratic, shared services co-operatives provide mutual benefit and the members retain their individual autonomy and independence.

Two examples of shared services co-operatives in Victoria are the Macaulay Community Enterprise Network Co-operative Ltd and Purchasing Victoria Co-operative Ltd.

Advice and Advice

A group of small businesses that wanted to form a co-operative were recently persuaded by a lawyer to register as an association. The lawyer knew a bit about associations. Unfortunately, a bit was not enough and registration as an association was not allowed by the Registrar because their proposed activity was to be profit-making. They are now returning to their co-operative idea.

In contrast, the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd would be pleased to provide authoritative advice on the co-operative option:

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